

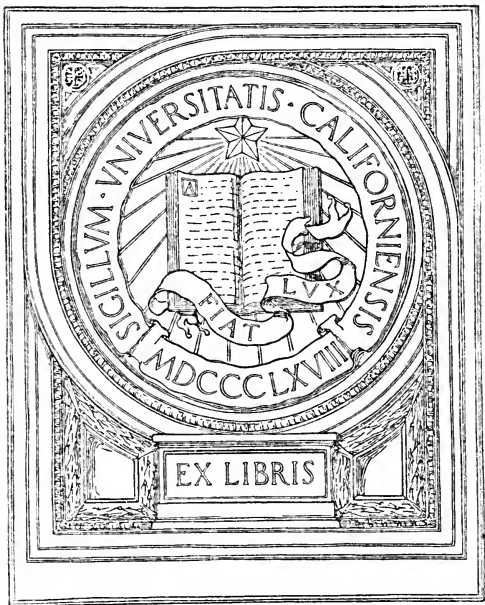
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TOUCHES AND HINTS.

RHYMES,

BY

CHARLES A. SUMNER.

READ AT THE SECOND GRAND ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF
IOTA CHAPTER OF THE ZETA PSI FRATERNITY,
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

SAN FRANCISCO:

PRINTED BY JOS. WINTERBURN & CO., BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS,

No. 417 Clay Street, between Sansome and Battery.

1874.

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21 June
CHARLES A. SUMNER. 1825 - 1900
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RHYMES.

BY CHARLES A. SUMNER.

It seems as if the gracious Will,
That hollowed out the bay,
And smote the outer, rock-ribbed hill,
To ope a golden way

For sea and ship, for home and hope,
Was equal in behest
That man should plant on yonder slope
The College of the West.

The long, low beach of sedge and vines ;
The slow-retreating plain ;
The emerald upland, which reclines
Against the mountain chain,—

Whose steep ascent and swelling girth
Lend dignifying powers
To that choice spot of all the earth
For academic towers !

O, beauteous scene for brain and heart,
Our students' life beguiles ;
The sleeping vale, the teeming mart,
The ocean and the isles.

With ever varied, shifting phase
Of motion and repose ;
With morn's impenetrable haze,
With evening's gorgeous close !

With shimmering noon, and glittering night,
Of such translucent beam
As on the meditative sight
Revives the Berkeleyan dream !

Where wintry snows are never known,
Nor enervating heat ;
Within the soft isothermal zone,
A sure and perfect seat.

Where nature for the site supplies
The Oracles of Fate,
A bounteous wisdom justifies
The Nation and the State.

And thanks to many a noble friend,
Of unsectarian aim,
Whose large endowments here descend
With honor to his name.

And thanks for toil in leading chairs,
By men of cultured skill,
Who, mid a thousand teasing cares,
Have kept an even will.

Auspicious History ! From this page
We lift a trustful gaze ;
Though weightiest issues mark the Age,
And anarchies amaze.

Strong Fort of Faith ! Assaults are vain.
Thy banners never furled !
While Time may last, thou shalt retain
The Outlook of a world !

Fair priestess ! who shall yet indite
 Ten thousand glorious names ;
 With reverent sentiments to-night,
 We dare invoke thy flames !

“ Room for Reformers ! with their sovereign plan
 To heal or mitigate the woes of man.”
 The cry is ancient as our Nation’s time,
 Yet born anew in every tapster’s rhyme.
 The field has widened at each fresh demand,
 Till desk and forum ope on every hand.

GIVE HEED, O PEOPLE ! is the prophet shout,
 Of those whose theory is the “ Latest out.”
 Nor less potential is the summons borne
 To found a sect or lift a race forlorn ;
 Or force a city corner upon corn.
 Alike their dignity, and the crowd to back :
 The long-eared medium and the short-haired quack.

The simple truths our patriot Fathers saw,
 Sketched in resolve and molded into Law ;
 By which in perils unsurpassed they stood—
 Built with their bones, cemented with their blood :—
 Are all too narrow for the modern seer,
 Whose wondrous License strikes the popular ear !
 Whose published writ is, Readiness for “ fame,”
 Won through a bloodless martyrdom of shame.

Pretending now a scientific lore,
 And now a message from the ‘ other shore.’
 In either case prepared to tell, in terms,
 The grandest compound and the primal germs.
 Rehearsing nonsense in exultant tone,
 As if the lectures made creation groan.

In any case, prepared to scoff and sneer
At every custom decency holds dear ;—
Seducing ignorance with lascivious charms,
And healthy conscience stinging with alarms.

Such are Outriders, on the secular coasts,
For less unselfish, less courageous hosts ;
Who now disclaim, and afterwards suggest
The "Progress" programme may be for the best ?
With cunning glance, to note in every move
The points debauched communities approve ;
Lest they should fail to pander, just in time,
To some new doctrine, vicious but "sublime !"

See worthy subjects for the prison lock
Unblushing labor with the corporate stock,
To cover up the robbery of a ring,
Or fast enthrone some great monopoly king ;
Until the people, rising in a storm,
Announce their temper for a real Reform.
When Lo ! the foremost, with the loudest cheer,
These rear-guard veterans suddenly appear !
Their functions now, a double game of cheat :
Shape voted verdicts to a flat defeat ;
The while they make their own promotion sure,
And preach a flattering gospel to the poor.
Then in some office, lucrative and warm,
They whisper sadly of a lost Reform !

Behold the highest council in the land !
What men dishonored ! and what rogues command !
The jovial scoundrel (or the lucky fool)
Rich from his ventures in a gambler's pool,
For bigger tricks, or personal regard,
Concludes to take the Senatorial card.

Instant proclaims, in condescending tone,
His champion platform, as the "Laborers own"!
Secures his organs by a brand new "dress,"
A monthly stipend, and a mammoth press.
Pensions electors and the hovering scribes
Who write his speeches and discount his bribes.
Assumes the toga with an easy air,
And flings, off-hand, the talks his friends prepare.
(Reminding cronies—in their private chat,—
"Though wit had prestige, we've reformed all that.")

Who shall these workings and these powers abate?
Inform the masses and preserve the State!
Where will you find the valorous strength and will
To push these creatures from the seats they fill?
Who shall come forward and combine to raise
The social standard of our earlier days;
When thieves by purchasing official place
Could not obtain an honest household's grace;
When those whose name no stamp of honor bore,
Would not presume to cross the good man's door.

Behold the masters of the daily "Press"!
Whose broadening power is almost measureless.
How few perceive, confess, and trembling bear
The moral burdens in the realm they share?
How many to such high position bring
The view and purpose of a sordid thing.
Perhaps buy out, and run with vengeful cast,
Some well-born journal with an honored past.
Breed typhoid-tumults o'er a clerkship wrong;
Misquote large markets, and old "Jobs" prolong.
Inlay their columns with the tales that smirch,
And pass the platter in the wealthiest church.

Spurn trifling offers from the babbling trade,
And keep their virtue on a dress parade ;
Maintain their cipher at the thousandth score,—
And shed contempt on every dollar store.
Let others falter with a timid qualm,—
Their voice, we know, is always for Reform.

A tearful pity touches the distress
Of those compelled to read our neutral Press.
Where circumstantial suppositions surge,
In reckless grammar, to the very verge
Of dire conclusions on the mooted head,
Of what was once surmised to have been said.

Who can presume to adequately greet
The fervid, candid, superficial sheet ?
Where every flabby “ Reformation ” scheme,—
Creed of fanatic, and the sick man’s dream,—
Is treated gently, —in a *savant* style,
Proudly repressive of the reader’s smile.
Where every day, in paragraph and lines,
The special hobby of the tripod shines ;—
In tireless iteration making known
A Balance Regulator, all his own !
A short, infallible, perspicuous code,
Which sets each subject his appropriate load.
The very rich shall all the taxes pay ;
The very poor need only vote and play.
The prentice builders shall their wages rate,
And draw an extra tribute from the State ;
While those who mark the trestle-board and chart,
Must take their income in a love of Art.

Who shall expose the communistic scamps ?
 Combat agrarians, and the lecturing tramps ?
 To real complaints appropriately reply ;
 To borrowed doubts return the reasons why ?
 With pleasing humor dissipate their chaff,
 And send their problems to the idiot's laugh.
 Incline the people for the public weal,
 To crush their counsels with contemptuous heel ;
 The mighty gulfs resistlessly present,
 'Twixt just ambition and vile discontent ;
 Illumne anew the pathway and the scope
 Of careful judgment and a healthy Hope ?

For such a service—welcomed in the van—
 Expect the College educated man !
 To some a special and a noble call :
 A sphere of duty, more or less, to all.

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What though uncounted thousands never own
 The debt in such essential service grown ?
 What though a legion cannot understand
 That any dangers shadow o'er the land ?
 And least of all, suspect explosive force
 From such a shallow, freedom-prating source ?
 Though every warning is decried and hissed,
 The threats portentous and the debt exist.

And O, the grateful tribute, on this score,
 Due the *alumni* who have gone before !

Enough of surface thinking in the land.
 Sufficient privilege at each youth's command.
 More than enough of Proverb lure extant, —
 Oft wreathed in context of revolting cant.

As well predict a harvest-field of grain
On arid hill-side or Sahara Plain,
From equinoctials and the lunar heat;
As with the tribes of ignorant conceit
Rely alone for fructifying powers
On wealth's rewards and moral saw-dust showers.
The need momentous is the souls combined
With quick, electric, cultivated mind;
At whose decree economies shall rest
Beneath profound, inexorable test.

With no detraction of the highest force
We speak emphatic for the College course.
Since history's pages, at each calm review,
Approve the framers, "wiser than they knew."
The fostered relish for established fact,—
The root of structure and the sum exact.
The mental habits which the schools have shown,
Wed to the nerves and bred into the bone.
The days appointed and the tasks assigned
To try the vigor of the pupil's mind,
Before a bench of criticizing friends,
Whose cheering counsel with their censure blends.
The builded will to check the Fancy's haste,
And make it wait on judgment and on taste.
The fine attrition in the class retreat,
Mid growths of friendship,—never more so sweet!
The duress for self-introspection keen;
The hard, remorseless wearing of the green.
The glorious sovereignty which this drill implies
To summon, portion, point, and focalize;
Till given topics at the chosen hours

Feel the white burning of harmonious powers;
With not a faculty allowed to roam
Till law and contrast drive the statement home.

Vast opportunities denote,
The deepening want for men,
Whose discipline shall antidote
The shams of speech and pen.

Whose quenchless passion for the truth
Shall find a scholar's art,
As from the fresh, brave soul of youth
The fit suggestions start.

Here grandest fruits of sound review
In physics and in thought,
With all the lights of Science new,
Instructingly are brought.

Here for Life Tournaments we bid,
With Learning and with Love;
Where Logic's iron hand is hid
Within the knightly glove.

Priestess of Wisdom! In whose torch
The lights of satire play:
Grant its imparted fires may scorch
The falsehoods of the day.

Priestess of Wisdom! Genial glow,
The censers by thy side.
Inspire the God-sons thou shalt know
With warmth of manly pride.

And guard the children of thy heart,
 Linked in a mystic grace,
As from thy altars they depart,
 To take their waiting place.

No vaunt of spirit or of mien,
 No over-zeal for strife;
But ready for each earnest scene
 That consecrates a life.

